

Message Text

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1. HERewith FULL TEXT LESLIE H. GELB BYLINER, NEW YORK TIMES, TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 17, HEADED "ANOTHER US COMPROMISE POSITION IS REPORTED REACHED ON STRATEGIC ARMS."
2. WASHINGTON, FEB. 16 -- WHITE HOUSE SOURCES SAY THAT PRESIDENT FORD HAS REACHED ANOTHER COMPROMISE POSITION WITH- IN HIS ADMINISTRATION ON THE TALKS ON LIMITING STRATEGIC ARMS THAT HE HOPES WILL LEAD TO A PACT WITH MOSCOW THIS YEAR BUT AVOID AN OPEN BATTLE WITH THE PENTAGON.
3. ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS EXPRESSED THE BELIEF THAT THE PRESIDENT'S RESPONSE TO THE SOVIET PROPOSALS LAST MONTH WOULD FURTHER NARROW THE NEGOTIATING GAP ON THE ISSUE OF SOVIET BOMBERS AND THE AMERICAN CRUISE MISSILE WITHOUT RAIS- ING A MAJOR POLITICAL ISSUE DURING AN ELECTION YEAR.

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4. AS PART OF THE PROCESS, SECRETARY OF STATE HENRY A. KISSINGER HAS BEEN WARNING SOVIET LEADERS THAT FAILURE TO REACH A NEW STRATEGIC ARMS PACT INCREASES FORMER GOVERNOR RONALD REAGAN'S PROSPECTS AGAINST PRESIDENT FORD AND THUS

THE CHANCES FOR A HUGE LEAP FORWARD IN AMERICAN MILITARY SPENDING.

5. AT THE SAME TIME, MR. KISSINGER HAS BEEN TELLING THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF THAT WITHOUT A NEW PACT THAT INCORPORATES AND THUS PROTECTS THEIR NEW NUCLEAR WEAPONS PROGRAMS, THESE PROGRAMS ARE ALMOST CERTAIN TO BE ELIMINATED BY A DEMOCRATIC-CONTROLLED CONGRESS OR A DEMOCRATIC ADMINISTRATION IN 1977.

6. DETAILS OF THE LATEST UNITED STATES PROPOSAL COULD NOT BE LEARNED TODAY. IT IS KNOWN THAT THE SOVIET PROPOSAL GIVEN TO MR. KISSINGER IN MOSCOW LAST MONTH REFLECTED AGREEMENT ON ALMOST ALL KEY ISSUES, EXCEPT TWO.

7. ONE OUTSTANDING ISSUE IS WHETHER AND HOW TO LIMIT THE SOVIET BOMBER KNOWN IN THE WEST AS THE BACKFIRE. MOSCOW REJECTS ANY LIMITATIONS. WHILE THE PENTAGON INSISTS ON STRINGENT LIMITS, MR. KISSINGER IS PREPARED TO BEND.

8. THE OTHER ISSUE IS THE CRUISE MISSILE -- AN AIR-BREATHING DRONE WITH GREAT POTENTIAL ACCURACY NOW UNDER DEVELOPMENT IN THE UNITED STATES -- LAUNCHED FROM SURFACE SHIPS. MOSCOW WANTS TO BAN THEM BEYOND A RANGE OF 375 MILES. WHILE THE ADMINISTRATION IS UNITED BEHIND A RANGE UP TO 1,500 MILES, THE PENTAGON WANTS THESE MISSILES ON A LARGE NUMBER OF SHIPS AND MR. KISSINGER ON ONLY A FEW.

9. BEHIND THE RESOLUTION OF THE CRUISE-MISSILE ISSUE GENERALLY IS THE KEY ISSUE OF VERIFICATION. A CRUISE MISSILE MIGHT BE FLIGHT-TESTED AT A RANGE OF 1,500 MILES BUT ACTUALLY COULD FLY FOUR TIMES FARTHER. THESE MISSILES COULD BE EQUIPPED WITH NUCLEAR OR CONVENTIONAL WARHEADS, AND IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE TO TELL WHICH WITHOUT LOOKING INSIDE.

10. WITHOUT HIGH CONFIDENCE IN VERIFICATION, THE POSSIBILITIES FOR CHEATING OR MUTUAL ACCUSATIONS OF CHEATING LOOM LARGE.

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BILITIES FOR CHEATING OR MUTUAL ACCUSATIONS OF CHEATING LOOM LARGE.

11. BEYOND THIS LIES A BASIC DIFFERENCE IN STRATEGIC PHILOSOPHIES BETWEEN MR. KISSINGER AND THE PENTAGON. THE SECRETARY THINKS THAT SINCE EACH SIDE ALREADY HAS MANY THOUSANDS OF NUCLEAR WARHEADS, A NEW PACT SHOULD NOT BE ENDANGERED BECAUSE OF A FEW HUNDRED MORE BACKFIRES AND CRUISE MISSILES. THE PENTAGON MAINTAINS THAT SITUATIONS COULD ARISE IN WHICH THESE BOMBERS AND MISSILES MIGHT PROVE DECISIVE.

12. IN THIS DEBATE, OFFICIALS ARE QUICK TO ACKNOWLEDGE, LIES POLITICAL DANGER FOR MR. FORD. BY ALL ACCOUNTS, THE

PRESIDENT IS CONVINCED THAT A NEW PACT WOULD HELP HIM

POLITICALLY. YET, MR. FORD ALSO SEES OUTSIDE FORCES, SUCH AS FORMER DEFENSE SECRETARY JAMES R. SCHLESINGER AND THE FORMER NAVY CHIEF, ADM. ELMO R. ZUMWALT JR., WAITING FOR THE MILITARY TO CALL FOUL, AND THEREIN LIES PENTAGON INFLUENCE.

13. IRONICALLY, MR. KISSINGER NOW FINDS HIMSELF DEFENDING A CRUISE-MISSILE PROGRAM THAT HE SUPPORTED BUT NEVER WANTED DEPLOYED. SEVERAL YEARS AGO, HE INSISTED THAT A RELUCTANT PENTAGON ACCELERATE THE PROGRAM WITH THE SOLE PURPOSE OF GIVING HIM A NEW BARGAINING CHIP WITH MOSCOW -- SOMETHING TO GIVE AWAY IN RETURN FOR A SOVIET CONCESSION. "HOW WAS I TO KNOW THE MILITARY WOULD COME TO LOVE IT?" MR. KISSINGER HAS ASKED PRIVATELY.

14. THE ARMS CONTROL AND DISARMAMENT AGENCY, A SEMI-AUTONOMOUS ADJUNCT OF THE STATE DEPARTMENT, HAS TENDED TO LINE UP IN INTERNAL DEBATES WITH THE PENTAGON AND AGAINST MR. KISSINGER. IN PAST YEARS, MR. KISSINGER FOUND IT USEFUL TO HAVE THIS AGENCY TAKING A SOFTER POSITION THAN HIS OWN, THUS LEAVING HIM TO CLAIM THE MIDDLE GROUND.

15. MR. KISSINGER, WHO HAD BEEN STRUGGLING WITH MR. SCHLESINGER OVER NUCLEAR ARMS POLICY, IS NOW SAYING UNCLASSIFIED

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PRIVATELY THAT IT WAS EASIER TO DEAL WITH THE PENTAGON WHEN HIS FORMER RIVAL WAS ITS BOSS THAN IT IS WITH DONALD H. RUMSFELD AS DEFENSE SECRETARY. AT A CRITICAL NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING IN SEPTEMBER, MR. SCHLESINGER SAID THAT THE BACKFIRE WAS NOT OF MAJOR STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE. MR. KISSINGER WAS HOPING TO DEVELOP THIS INTO A MORE CONCILIATORY AMERICAN NEGOTIATING STANCE. NOW, THE PENTAGON IS TAKING ITS STIFFEST POSITION YET ON BACKFIRE.

16. FINALLY, MR. KISSINGER MAY HAVE USED THE ARGUMENT ABOUT "AFTER FORD, THE REAGAN DELUGE" ONCE TOO OFTEN. SOVIET DIPLOMATS IN WASHINGTON REMEMBER MR. KISSINGER'S EARLIER WARNINGS ABOUT SENATOR HENRY M. JACKSON'S BECOMING PRESIDENT AND VASTLY INCREASING MILITARY SPENDING. SOVIET DIPLOMATS NO LONGER EXPRESS THE CONCERN THEY ONCE DID ABOUT THESE PREDICTIONS.

17. WITH ALL THE DELICATE MANEUVERING YET TO BE DONE, WHITE HOUSE AND STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS ARE EXUDING OPTIMISM ABOUT THE PROSPECTS FOR A NEW TREATY. PENTAGON OFFICIALS ARE CAUTIOUS.

18. THE SENATE IS BEGINNING TO PREPARE FOR THE FORTHCOMING DEBATE. SENATOR JACKSON, DEMOCRAT OF WASHINGTON, HAS BEEN

LETTING OUT THE WORD THAT EVEN THE PENTAGON IS WILLING TO GIVE AWAY TOO MUCH. SENATOR EDWARD M. KENNEDY, DEMOCRAT OF MASSACHUSETTS, IS DRAFTING A RESOLUTION OF SUPPORT, IN EFFECT, FOR MR. KISSINGER. THE DEBATE OVER THE PROSPECTIVE AGREEMENT IS LIKELY TO BEGIN EVEN BEFORE A TREATY IS SUBMITTED.

19. THE STARTING POINT FOR THE DEBATE, AS FOR THE CONTINUING NEGOTIATIONS, IS THE VLADIVOSTOK AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE REACHED IN NOVEMBER 1974. IN IT, EACH SIDE AGREED TO A CEILING OF 2,400 LONG-RANGE MISSILE LAUNCHERS AND BOMBERS, AND A CEILING WITHIN THAT OF 1,320 MISSILES MOUNTED WITH MULTIPLE WARHEADS THAT CAN STRIKE WIDELY DIFFERENT TARGETS. THE PACT WAS TO GO INTO EFFECT IN 1977, WHEN THE PRESENT INTERIM AGREEMENT LIMITING THE NUMBER OF MISSILE LAUNCHERS WAS TO EXPIRE, AND LAST UNTIL 1985.
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20. TWO PROBLEMS QUICKLY EMERGED. THE PENTAGON CONTENTENDED THAT THE SOVIET BACKFIRE BOMBER WAS CAPABLE OF REACHING THE UNITED STATES AND SHOULD COUNT WITHIN THE 2,400 CEILING. THE SOVIET UNION SAID IT SHOULD NOT BECAUSE BACKFIRE WAS NOT A LONG-RANGE AIRCRAFT.

21. THE SOVIET UNION MAINTAINED THAT AT VLADIVOSTOK IT WAS AGREED TO INCLUDE ALL MISSILES WITH A RANGE BEYOND 375 MILES IN THE 2,400 CEILING. UNDER PRODDING FROM THE PENTAGON, THE ADMINISTRATION ARGUED THAT THIS APPLIED ONLY TO BALLISTIC MISSILES THAT FLY OUTSIDE THE ATMOSPHERE, NOT TO AIR-BREATHING CRUISE MISSILES.

22. EFFORTS TO BREAK THIS DEADLOCK FAILED. LAST MONTH, THE SOVIET UNION SAID THAT IF THE ADMINISTRATION WOULD MAKE ANOTHER PROPOSAL IT WOULD OFFER "SIGNIFICANT MODIFICATIONS" IN ITS OWN POSITION.

23. THE STAGE WAS SET FOR THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING ON JAN. 13. FOUR OPTIONS WERE DISCUSSED.

24. THE FIRST WAS TO SEEK A MINIMUM AGREEMENT BASED SOLELY ON WHAT WAS ACCEPTED BY BOTH SIDES AT VLADIVOSTOK. IT WAS EVERYONE'S SECOND CHOICE. IT ALSO PROVIDED THE OCCASION FOR MR. KISSINGER TO LECTURE THE PENTAGON PARTICIPANTS ON THEIR INTERESTS. UNLESS THEY WERE WILLING TO MAKE THE ADDITIONAL CONCESSIONS NECESSARY TO GET A PACT, HE ARGUED, AND UNLESS THEIR NEW WEAPONS PROGRAMS WERE PROTECTED BY BEING INCLUDED IN THE NEW TREATY, THE DEMOCRATS WOULD CUT THEM FROM THE DEFENSE BUDGET. MR. RUMSFELD DISAGREED.

25. THE SOVIET UNION HAD REJECTED PREVIOUS FEELERS ON THIS KIND OF MINIMUM AGREEMENT. WHILE IT WOULD LEAVE THEM FREE

TO DO WHATEVER THEY WISHED ON BACKFIRES, IT WOULD ALSO LEAVE THE UNITED STATES WITHOUT CONSTRAINTS ON ITS CRUISE MISSILE.

26. THE SECOND OPTION WAS A VARIATION OF THE FIRST AND WAS GIVEN SCANT ATTENTION. IT DID, HOWEVER, EMBODY SOME IDEAS ON HOW TO DEAL WITH THE BACKFIRE ISSUE THAT MR. KISSINGER WAS TO USE WHEN HE ARRIVED IN MOSCOW.

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27. THE THIRD OPTION WAS MR. KISSINGER'S. IT WAS SIMILAR TO THE ONE HE SAID HE AND MR. SCHLESINGER HAD WORKED OUT IN SEPTEMBER AND MOSCOW HAD REJECTED. ITS MAIN FEATURES WERE A LOWERING OF THE 2,400 CEILING IN MISSILE LAUNCHERS AND BOMBERS BY SEVERAL HUNDRED, ALLOWING MOSCOW 250 TO 300 BACKFIRES OVER THE NEW REDUCED CEILING AND LIMITING THE NUMBER OF AIRCRAFT AND SHIPS THAT COULD CARRY CRUISE MISSILES WITH A RANGE UP TO 1,500 MILES.

28. THE FOURTH OPTION WAS THE POSITION OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF AND MR. RUMSFELD. IT HAD BEEN EMBODIED IN A MEMORANDUM FROM MR. RUMSFELD TO MR. FORD AND, IN EFFECT, MAINTAINED THAT IF MOSCOW REJECTED THIS POSITION, THE ONLY ACCEPTABLE ALTERNATIVE WOULD BE THE FIRST OPTION. ITS MAIN FEATURE WAS THAT ALL THE BACKFIRES MUST COUNT WITHIN THE 2,400 CEILING. IF MOSCOW AGREED TO THIS, THE PENTAGON WOULD MAKE THE FOLLOWING CONCESSIONS: THE AIRCRAFT USED TO LAUNCH LONG-RANGE CRUISE MISSILES WOULD COUNT AGAINST THE 1,320 CEILING ON LAUNCHERS WITH MULTIPLE WARHEADS AS WELL AS THE 2,400 CEILING AND SUBMARINE-LAUNCHED CRUISE MISSILES WITH A RANGE BEYOND 375 MILES WOULD BE BANNED.

29. MR. KISSINGER CITED RECENT AMERICAN INTELLIGENCE REPORTS THAT HAD SLIGHTLY DOWNGRADED THE CAPABILITIES OF THE BACKFIRE. GEN. GEORGE S. BROWN, CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS, SAID THAT THE BACKFIRE COULD STILL READILY REACH TARGETS ALL OVER THE UNITED STATES.

30. MR. RUMSFELD MAINTAINED THAT CONGRESS WOULD NEVER APPROVE AN AGREEMENT IN WHICH WASHINGTON CONCEDED A NUMERICAL ADVANTAGE TO MOSCOW, AND THAT BACKFIRES HAD TO BE LIMITED.

31. SECRETARY KISSINGER GAVE THE PENTAGON OPTION TO SOVIET AMBASSADOR ANATOLY F. DOBRYNIN THAT NIGHT.

32. ON MONDAY, JAN. 19, THE DAY MR. KISSINGER WAS TO LEAVE FOR MOSCOW, THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL MET AGAIN. MR.

KISSINGER WAS GIVEN AUTHORITY TO MAKE ANOTHER PROPOSAL AFTER
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HE RECEIVED MOSCOW'S RESPONSE TO THE FOURTH OPTION.

33. THIS SECOND PROPOSAL COMBINED FEATURES OF HIS OWN POSITION AND THAT OF THE PENTAGON. IT ALLOWED FOR REDUCING THE 2,400 CEILING AND PERMITTING A LIMITED NUMBER OF BACKFIRES ABOVE THE NEW CEILING.

34. IN MOSCOW, THE SOVIET LEADER, LEONID I. BREZHNEV, WAS TO PICK UP ON THE PROPOSAL FOR REDUCTIONS, SUGGESTING THAT THE 2,400 FIGURES BE LOWERED "BY A HUNDRED OR MORE." HE ARGUED THAT AMERICAN INTELLIGENCE HAD GREATLY EXAGGERATED THE CAPABILITIES OF THE BACKFIRE AND PRESENTED TECHNICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE BOMBER. HE ALSO INSISTED ON A BAN OF ALL SEA-LAUNCHED CRUISE MISSILES WITH A RANGE BEYOND 375 MILES.

35. MR. KISSINGER OFFERED TWO NEW COMPROMISES THAT MR. BREZHNEV REJECTED.

36. ON THE BACKFIRE, THE RUSSIANS COULD HAVE 250 TO 300 ABOVE ANY NEW AGREED OVERALL CEILING, BUT THIS LIMIT WOULD APPLY ONLY FROM 1977 TO 1982, NOT UNTIL 1985 WHEN THE TREATY WOULD EXPIRE. IN THE LAST THREE YEARS, MOSCOW COULD EXCEED THE LIMIT. THIS DOES NOT TROUBLE MR. KISSINGER SINCE THE RUSSIANS ARE BUILDING BACKFIRES ONLY AT THE RATE OF TWO EACH MONTH.

37. ON THE CRUISE MISSILE, THE UNITED STATES WOULD BE LIMITED TO PUTTING CRUISE MISSILES WITH A RANGE BEYOND 375 MILES ON NO MORE THAN 25 SURFACE SHIPS. EACH OF THESE SHIPS WOULD HAVE ABOUT 10 LONG-RANGE CRUISE MISSILES, FOR A TOTAL OF ABOUT 250 LONG-RANGE CRUISE MISSILES. NEITHER THESE 250 CRUISE MISSILES NOR A COMPARABLE NUMBER OF BACKFIRES WOULD COUNT AGAINST THE OVERALL CEILING OF MISSILES AND BOMBERS.

38. AT THE END OF THE MOSCOW MEETINGS, THE FOLLOWING ISSUES WERE CONSIDERED VIRTUALLY RESOLVED:

39. AFTER A CLASS OF MISSILES HAS BEEN TESTED WITH MULTIPLE WARHEADS, ALL MISSILES OF THAT KIND DEPLOYED WILL COUNT AGAINST THE 1,320 CEILING. WITHOUT THIS PROVISION, NEITHER UNCLASSIFIED

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SIDE WOULD BE ABLE TO VERIFY FROM ITS SPY SATELLITES WHETHER A DEPLOYED MISSILE HAD MANY WARHEADS. THE UNITED STATES WANTED THIS.

40. ANY SOVIET MISSILE WITH A LARGER SILO OR MORE THRUST

THAN THE EXISTING SS-19 WILL BE CONSIDERED AS A HEAVY MISSILE. THE SOVIET UNION CAN HAVE NO MORE THAN 309 HEAVY

MISSILES. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS RESTRICTION IS THAT THE HEAVIER THE MISSILE, THE MORE EXPLOSIVE POWER AND MULTIPLE WARHEADS IT CAN CARRY.

41. SUBMARINE-LAUNCHED CRUISE MISSILES WITH A RANGE BEYOND 375 MILES ARE BANNED. VERIFICATION PROBLEMS REMAIN. BUT WITHOUT THIS BAN, THEY WOULD BE MORE DIFFICULT.

42. LONG-RANGE BOMBERS MAY HAVE CRUISE MISSILES WITH A RANGE UP TO 1,500 MILES, BUT EACH BOMBER WITH 10 TO 24 SUCH MISSILES WILL COUNT WITHIN THE OVERALL CEILING AND THE 1,320 CEILING. THE SOVIET UNION HAD BEEN ARGUING THAT EACH SUCH MISSILE SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN THE OVERALL CEILING. THIS INVOLVED MUTUAL CONCESSIONS.

43. THE UNITED STATES WILL PUT CRUISE MISSILES WITH A RANGE BEYOND 375 MILES ONLY ON ITS LONG-RANGE BOMBERS. THE RUSSIANS WERE CONCERNED THAT AMERICAN TACTICAL AIRCRAFT STATIONED IN AND AROUND EUROPE NOT HAVE THEIR CURRENT NUCLEAR CAPABILITY ENHANCED BY LONG-RANGE CRUISE MISSILES.

44. THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR A NEW PROPOSAL REST ONCE AGAIN WITH THE ADMINISTRATION. MR. KISSINGER HOPES TO RESUME THE NEGOTIATIONS WITH MOSCOW IN EARLY MARCH. END TEXT. INGERSOLL

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